

Our Boys Under Fire supremely confident

Letters From the Trenches Show Undaunted Spirit Even When Outnumbered and High Praise for Officers and Allied Fighters—Gripping Pen Pictures of Conditions

From Capt. James G. Finn, Company H, 165th Infantry (the old Sixty-ninth), to his family at 245 Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn.

MARCH 12, 1918.

I HAVEN'T had any experience with gas—many false alarms, but the only gas I have tackled was in the gas chamber at school last December. That was many times stronger than we will ever get in the field, and the respirator is complete protection against it. I do not fear it particularly, neither do I long to try conclusions with it.

Our alarm for it is the sounding of the Klaxon horn. It is difficult to get about in a forest at night when one is wearing a gas mask. I am writing this letter from my dugout, which is only ten feet under ground; a stairway, however leads down about thirty feet more to a telephone exchange, where we go if heavy shelling starts.

Our men are fine soldiers. They behaved like veterans under fire from the start. Give them enough experience and they won't need to ask odds from any soldiers in the world.

Father Duffy complimented the regiment at a recent gathering, telling them that they had received great praise from the French officers. That the inhabitants of every village we were in regretted our departure. That they had lived up to the best traditions of the old Sixty-ninth and that was high praise.

Father Duffy is well. He is certainly the right man in the right place. He takes a personal interest in the material as well as the spiritual welfare of each individual soldier.

March 24. Well, our first session in the front passed off splendidly. The men are in great spirits and have reason to be proud of themselves after their first experience under fire.

While I am writing this letter I am lying on a hillside which commands a wonderful view. The scenery is magnificent. I can see about fifteen towns from here. The sun is fine and warm and the birds are singing merrily. I understand now why they call this country "Sunny France." I am enjoying a sun bath, which is just as good as the brand afforded by the sand in front of our cottage at Old Orchard.

This is Palm Sunday. I attended high mass at 10 o'clock. It was a very impressive service. I can faintly hear our regimental band playing in a town about five kilometres away.

After our sojourn in the trenches it feels good to lie here resting in the long grass without thought of rattlers or scorpions a la Texas or shells and poison gas a la France.

I feel sure the prayers of our relatives and friends are protecting us because of our good fortune in the trenches. Some day I will be more explicit.

May 3, 1918. We are now located very near the German lines; we are in an open country. I had a good view of German trenches this afternoon from an elevation about five hundred yards away. There is an abundance of barbed wire between the two lines; except for this it was not unlike the meadow in Prospect Park.

Last night Major Stacom and I went through the front line on inspection. It was very interesting. We started about 8 o'clock and returned at 1 A. M.

Our artillery is pounding away right now, yet near by a very good songfest is being held by a group of soldiers. The roar of the big guns shakes my hand as I write. The unusual becomes commonplace after one is in France for a while.

Our artillery has been giving the Germans a fierce "strafing" for more than forty-eight hours. It dies down for a while, then swells to a mighty roar.

The French people are very likable. I wish now that I had studied more French and less Latin and Greek. The French officers are splendid men and valiant soldiers.

How quickly time passes. I am in France just about six months. We get the Paris edition of the *Herald* and the *Chicago Tribune* every day, so we manage to keep in touch with the world.

I hope the third Liberty Loan will be a huge success. The people are very gen-

erous to give to so many war funds. It certainly gives the men over here added courage to know the home people are backing us up so nobly.

Recently we have received tobacco and cigarettes from THE SUN Tobacco Fund and from the Red Cross. Needless to say the men were very grateful to the donors.

From Private George Dryhurst, Fourth Cavalry Brigade, Fourth Machine Gun Squadron, British Expeditionary Force. Dryhurst, although only 21, has seen three birthdays in active service. The letter was written to his cousin, Miss Eleanor Dryhurst of Blythwood Farms, Greenwich, Conn.

APRIL 4, 1918.

DEAR COUSIN: I am sure you have read all about the great clash that has come in the west. Well, you know it was no great surprise for us, as we have been preparing for it long enough; but my word! I did not think there were so many Germans.

They came on us like a swarm of bees. They were cut down with our artillery and machine gun fire. Their losses in the first two days must have been appalling. We all know ours are great, but, by Jove, we've made him sit up.

Well, I've been through some very exciting times, in the way of having a good fight with the old man. I'm not going to say that I like his "good fights," because I don't want to die yet, and I have been very close to it many a time.

My worst time was when Fritz broke through—I can't tell you the name—and we were rushed up to stop his advance, which we did. But, my word! didn't he hammer us with machine gun fire! At the finish we had to retire because he was too many for us, and I had to run with a machine gun on my shoulder.

We held him until late in the afternoon, when he must have got reinforced and recommenced his attack. I had a machine gun and I knew I could not get very far with my own load of equipment and this gun also, else I might have been a prisoner or killed and lose the gun also. So I got rid of my load and got away very easily with the gun.

I will tell you what I did lose in the first few days of this fighting—horse, saddle, underclothing and all personal belongings, which we always carry in the wallets on our saddle; then I threw my haversack and other things away. Wouldn't you have done the same if you had been in my place?

My word! Fritz did pelt us with machine gun fire. They were cutting the ground up and ping-pong bullets all around me. I don't mind telling you that I shook hands with myself after coming out of that. You can bet that when we took up other positions I was just about "absolutely

winded." But just you "leave it to George," he doesn't let a Fritz catch him bending.

I am rattling along here and I don't know whether the censor will pass it or not. I'll chance it—so here goes again. But my exciting times were not finished. My next tussle with Fritz was at —.

He was holding a wood, a very dominating position. He could see every movement of our troops from this wood for miles. So we had to put him out of it, which we did, though we paid the price. The cavalry dismounted and we were sent to take this wood, and we did take it; took some Fritzes and machine guns, but, oh! going up the rise! He played havoc with us, but we stuck it out and what remained of us took it with a rush, and our infantry still hold it.

When we got to his side, you believe me, there were hundreds of Germans dead and wounded lying about; so we know he is getting it very stiff also. Fritz is losing a vast number of men; many were lying dead in their "funk holes" (that's a hole dug in the ground, enough cover for one man). Now, that showed good workmanship of our riflemen, nipping them like that.

I have had about five different horses since the offensive of Fritz's began, had them killed and wounded and lost all my personal belongings. Would like to catch the Fritz who got some of my souvenirs!

Forgot to tell you that in the first few days of this offensive of Fritz's I was fighting alongside the French. They are fine men to stand with and they'll fight to the last, if they are given the opportunity.

By the way, have you received my photograph yet? You would not be able to recognize me now by looking at that, as I am dirty, clothes in a very bad state and want a shave very badly, but under all that natural camouflage the same young G. D. lives still dodging them.

Well, I've had three good scraps and come out of each one quite O. K. and I am wondering where my next one will be. What probably softened my heart was to see the French women and children having to leave their dear old homes and losing everything; it was a pitiful sight to us, you know. But still this is war of a most severe nature; therefore we must expect things like this.

Well, our infantry are holding Fritz now, so we are back a little way resting and being made up to our proper strength, ready for another tussle with him. I think the tide will turn shortly in our favor, with the aid of your American boys. They are round here, and I have spoken to a good many. I think we can give Fritz all he desires. One thing, he is not having all his own way with us, like

he has on the other fronts. He's got something up against him with the British and French. "Vive les Allies!"

LATER, APRIL 12, 1918.

I have not managed to get this letter off yet, as you see by this date. Perhaps it will go to-day.

We have heard from a lot of our boys who were wounded in that attack. They are going on O. K. and wishing us, who were left, the best of luck. It was a splendid attack, there was not a flaw in the whole thing and it was splendid to see the determination of our officers, though I am sorry to say we lost a few of those splendid officers.

Say! Among our new officers we have an American. He joined the ranks on the outbreak of the war, but recently took a commission in the M. G. G., and he is a proper lad. One of the best, but some of our boys are not used to hearing the American drawing speech, so naturally when he lets it rip there's some good laughs go out all around.

I am quite happy during these hard times and, by the way, your American boys are in the line with us and the French now, so Fritz is up against some real good stuff, is he not? I think we can manage to give Fritz a good smack, between the three of us.

I have "bags" to do, so I must conclude. Don't forget to write me soon, perhaps I will have some more exciting news to tell you in my next. G. D.

From Gerald J. Barry, who enlisted in California, and went over to France with the Rainbow Division from Camp Mills, to his aunt, Mrs. C. L. Hemphill of 39 Clarendon avenue and the members of her family.

APRIL 10, 1918, ANYWHERE.

DEAR ONES AT HOME—This will be a gas bomb from the front, for that is where I am now and have been for a good six weeks. It is interesting to watch the fire at night, for it just looks like a great Fourth of July fireworks display, and we see everything that was ever put out in the rocket line with just a little more noise.

Last night we had quite a fine show for a little over two hours and Fritz got very little sleep if any at all.

They are getting it hard now and after the big drive is over I don't think it will take us very long to get home, for that will be the end of this great struggle that has been going on for so long. Won't it be a great and grand feeling to hear those three words, "War is over" and to know it?

I wish I could send a picture to you of the little town we are in now, but I can't, so I will try to take you through it in this letter.

At one time this place was very near a thousand strong; now there are no French people here; they were all driven out when the Boche came in. Now we have full sway of what is left and that is nothing. The houses are all shot down, the church has had no less than ten six inch shells in it, so that there is just enough left to tell that there was a church there at one time.

I will be a good blind man when I get home and the dark will never stop me. I have it on any cat that ever lived for getting around in the dark, for a light up here has never been lit since the war started and matches are a thing we have long forgot, but every man has a lighter like the one you sent me.

We are safe from their fire, as we have many strong dugouts and they are right near us at all times, but, at that, we can hear the singing of their shells lots of times as they go by.

I had a great lot of fun out of those gas attacks and now they have started a new line of talk with the fellows. Everything is "That's more gas attacks" if a fellow starts a story of any kind. Gee, but they were a great pleasure, the nearest thing to a show over here. Bech is in another place not far from me, but I haven't seen him for nearly two weeks. He is getting on fine and is in the best of health. As for myself I never felt better in my life; the only thing is my appetite and it just keeps on growing, but I always manage to eat my share of the mess and am never late.

Now I will say good night, with a wish that there are no holes in this letter when it gets to you and that you are all in the best of health. Love to all. GERALD.

Cotillo to Greet Italian King



Salvatore A. Cotillo, Senator from the 20th New York District.

SALVATORE A. COTILLO of this city, State Senator from the Twentieth district, has just arrived in Italy as the special representative of the United States. Senator Cotillo's work in the land of his ancestors will be to combat the poisonous German propaganda that seeks to disrupt the nation and weaken the morale of its people. The Senator will tell the people of Italy just what the United States is doing and intends to do to help win the war.

Two statues representing the first and third Liberty Loans will be presented to the King of Italy by Senator Cotillo, gifts from associates in this country. One hundred thousand Americans of Italian birth have affixed their names to a petition which will also be presented to the Italian King.

Senator Cotillo was born in Naples in 1885. With his parents he came to America in 1894 and the family settled in Harlem. In 1902 he was graduated from Public School 83 and then studied for two years at De Witt Clinton High School. He later attended Manhattan College. He received his degree of bachelor of laws from Fordham University in 1911.

In 1913 he was elected to the Assembly of this State and was reelected for another term. In 1917 he was elected to the State Senate. Senator Cotillo is a member of the law firm of Cotillo, Manetto & Anieta.